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The boundary between British

Guiana and Venezuela

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THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN BRITISH GUIANA  
AND VENEZUELA.

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By E. F. IM THURN,

Demerara, July, 1879.

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[REPRINTED BY COUNSEL FOR VENEZUELA.]

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## APPENDIX.

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### MR. IM THURN'S PAMPHLET ON THE BOUNDARY QUESTION.

[On Feb. 8, 1878, Señor F. J. Marmol published at Caraccas an article on the boundary question. A translation of it was printed as an appendix to Mr. Boddam-Wittham's "Roraima and British Guiana," London, 1879. To this Mr. im Thurn made a reply which was noticed in *Nature* for Oct. 16, 1879, Vol. 20, p. 581, as follows :

"The boundary between British Guiana and Venezuela *Nature*, Oct. 16, 1879. is a very vexed question, and in consequence of Mr. Boddam-Whetham having included in his recent work some notes on it from a Venezuelan source, Mr. E. F. im Thurn, a well-known authority on matters relating to British Guiana, has gone carefully into the matter. He has just embodied the results of his investigations in a little *brochure*, which contains a good deal of geographical information. Mr. im Thurn regards the following as the best settlement of the question. The mouth of the Moroooca should be taken as the northernmost point of our colony, and from there to the old Dutch post on the Cuyuni, the boundary should be as in Cordazzi's map. Thence it should be carried to the nearest point of the Mazaruni, and then up the course of that river to the junction of the River Cako, and along the latter river to Mt. Roraima. From that central and well-marked point, southward to the source of the Corentyne, and then northward along the course of that river, it should follow the line laid down in Sir R. Schomburgk's map."

Mr. im Thurn's article was first published in *The Royal Gazette* of July 26 and July 31, 1879, at Demerara, and



was afterwards republished in a pamphlet with no change except a few verbal corrections. We file an original with the Commission.

Mr. im  
Thurn.

Mr. im Thurn is an English M. A., went to the colony in 1877 as a naturalist under the auspices of Sir Joseph Hooker, is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, was at one time editor of *Timahri*, the principal periodical of the colony, and has distinguished himself by a number of explorations of the far interior, for the last of which the Royal Society the Royal Geographical Society and the British Association contributed £200 each. In 1882, by appointment of the Home Government, he became the magistrate, and, subsequently, the ruler with almost absolute power, of the region between the Pomeroon and Barima Point, and has exercised such functions to the present day with great energy and good sense, and to universal approbation.

There are matters in his pamphlet which we do not agree with. He, naturally, does not meet Señor Marmol's legal positions by a strict legal argument. If he had then realized what he afterwards learned to his cost, that the eastern mountain arm of Roraima is a great natural barrier (p. , *supra*), he would not have passed it over in order to take the Mazeruni which skirts its northern cliffs as the scientific boundary nearest to the Essequibo. This mountain range is now adopted by the English as the boundary of a district.

Mr. im  
Thurn  
approves the  
Moroooca line.

But this article is that of an Englishman of approved judgment, in strong sympathy with the colony, published there, and, so far as we know, not there combated by any one. It is written in a pre-eminently fair and temperate tone. His conclusion is that the Dutch and English occupation in no way justifies a claim to the Barima region or to the Cuyuni basin. Great Britain must make out a very clear case in order to overcome the weight of Mr. im Thurn's judgment.



[*Mr. in Thurn's pamphlet, July, 1879.*]

[*The side notes are not in the original.*]

## THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN BRITISH GUIANA AND VENEZUELA.

Some articles on this question, originally published in *La Opinion Nacional* of Venezuela, by Francisco J. Marmol, having now been reprinted at Caracas, in pamphlet form, at the National Printing Office, in what is called an "official edition" have been translated by Mr. Boddam-Wetham — who visited this colony in the early part of 1878, and who went from here to Caracas — as an appendix to his recently published book entitled "*Roraima and British Guiana.*" As this boundary question is of considerable importance, it seems desirable that the British Government, which at least twice in the last forty years, has found its efforts to obtain a settlement of the question baffled by its inability to obtain the practical co-operation of the Venezuelan authorities, should seize the present opportunity, when public attention in Venezuela is directed to the matter, and when, apparently, if this pamphlet is really issued officially, the Government of that Republic are able and anxious to give the necessary co-operation to decide the matter once for all. Some account of this pamphlet and of the whole question should, therefore, be not uninteresting to all concerned in the colony of British Guiana.

F. J. Marmol's  
article of  
Feb., 1878.

The writer of the pamphlet is, as appears on the title page, a lawyer; and it may be inferred from a passage in the text, that he was in 1857 the Governor of the Venezuelan province of Guiana. How far he writes with official authority is not very certain; but it is possible from the words "official edition" and "national printing press" which, as already stated, appear on the title page, that he does not write solely in his private capacity.

English settlements confined to the coast.

The territory in dispute commences on the western bank of the Essequibo River, and extends to an undefined distance toward the Orinoco. Along and near the banks of the Essequibo is a fairly dense population of English subjects, at least during the lower part of its course, and along and near the banks of the Orinoco is a tolerably thick population of Venezuelans; but the intermediate space is inhabited only by some scattered Indians, and is visited only at long intervals by a few travellers, traders, adventurers or explorers. The land is chiefly low-lying swamp, and is covered with dense forest; and, though a few rivers, the Pomeroon, the Moroooca, the Waini or Guiana and the Barima, with their tributaries, run through it to the sea, yet none of these are of any great size, length, or importance.

Venezuelan mines, 1857.

This district being claimed both by the Venezuelans and by the English, neither is able to advance in it without offending the other. It must, however, be admitted that the complaints of aggression have as yet been made chiefly by the Venezuelans. Several instances are quoted by Marmol. One of these is the well-known case of the gold mines of the Cuyuni River, which occurred in 1857-8. Marmol, who at the time was "managing the government of the Province of Guiana"—in which province much of the course of the Cuyuni is situated—says that at that time, the gold mines of Tupuquen, on the river Yuruari, a tributary of the Cuyuni, having been recently discovered and attracting a good deal of attention, he had to resist new and exaggerated claims made by the Governor of Demerara (Mr., since Sir, Philip Wodehouse), and that it was even officially maintained that these auriferous regions were within the limits of British Guiana; and that, under this false impression, expeditions were authorized, and exploring licenses were granted to engineers in the name of the British Government.

That is the Venezuelan view of the case; the English is somewhat different. In 1857, certain English expeditions were, indeed, sent to Tupuquen, but their sole result was a tardy acknowledgment from the English that the mines at that place were not in British territory. In or about 1863, certain gold mines on the Cuyuni River, at a distance of about two days' journey from its mouth, were worked by an English company formed in Georgetown; no serious attempts to wash for gold were made higher up the Cuyuni by any English subjects. But these English mines are very far from those of Tupuquen, which are at a distance of, roughly speaking, at the very least, twenty or thirty days' journey from the mouth of the Cuyuni. Tupuquen undoubtedly lies very far on the Venezuelan side of the boundary as claimed by the English and as laid down by Sir Robert Schomburgk. Had we, therefore, claimed the mines at that place it would have been most unwise and unwarrantable. But we made no such claim, and Marmol's attempt to quote such a claim as an act of aggression on our part must be based on a mistake. But he makes the statement in such apparent good faith as to suggest the idea that possibly, not only his statement, but the action of the Venezuelan Government, was founded on a mistake which has never yet been rectified. It is just possible that the Venezuelan Government, hearing some rumor that the English were working gold on the Cuyuni, hastily adopted the conclusion that this was in the neighborhood of Tupuquen, and within their territory. However this may have been, they appealed to the British Government to stop the alleged invasion of their territory; and the British Government having given notice to the Gold Mining Company that they must work only as adventurers and not claim British protection, the works were abandoned.

Marmol then enumerates two among many other alleged acts of aggression by the British Government. "In the

In 1857 the English acknowledged Venezuela's ancient right to the Yuruari region.

vicinity of the river Amacura, a navigable and important affluent of the Orinoco, emptying to the west of the river Barima, there exists an Indian village belonging to the district of Curiapo, Department of Zea. On taking our last census, in 1874, some British subjects from Demerara, who trade with those Indians, claimed the non-incorporation of that village in the census of the Republic, under the pretext that it is under the jurisdiction of the government of Demerara. Fortunately our commissioner for taking the census energetically opposed the claim, and the Indian village was incorporated in it." And again, "an Indian of the Morooca, (a river which undoubtedly belongs to us, as it rises and empties in our territory), having committed a murder, was taken to Demerara to be tried. The defendant's lawyer demurred on the ground of the incompetency of that tribunal, because the crime had been committed in Venezuelan territory."

Trouble from  
conflicting  
claims.

Now, as regards the first of these charges, the river Amacura is, according to Schomburgk, the boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana. Therefore, whether the Indian village in question ought or ought not to have been included in the Venezuelan census, depends upon which bank of the river it is on, and upon the unsettled question of the legitimacy of our claim, to establish that river as our boundary. Again, as regards the second case, the river Morooca lies far within the English boundaries as laid down by Schomburgk, and actually forms the boundary which the British Government was willing to allow to the Venezuelans; for, though claiming the land westward of the Morooca to the river Amacura, yet the English were ready to yield that to the Venezuelans in return for the cession of all Venezuelan claims to the lower course of the Cuyuni. Moreover, it is perhaps worth mentioning that in the case alluded to it was not an Indian belonging to the Morooca

who was seized and brought to trial in Georgetown, but a criminal of European extraction, who had fled to the Moroooca to escape the consequences of a crime committed in Demerara. So that from any point of view the British action was, not the seizure of a Venezuelan subject in Venezuelan territory, but the seizure of one of its own subjects in territory which it claims. The importance of this distinction rests on the fact that it is a common thing for our criminals to fly by way of the Moroooca to the Orinoco; and that, in the absence of an extradition treaty with Venezuela, it is, therefore, important to seize fugitive criminals in all territory which can be presumed to be British.

These instances are sufficient to show the very unsatisfactory nature of the conflicting claims to this territory. As Marmol points out, "there exists a constant and frequent commercial intercourse between the English settlements of Demerara and the interior. . . . The Indian inhabitants of this district are provided with all kinds of goods for their clothing, with powder and arms for their hunting, which they obtain either from the English colonists who come to trade with them, or get for themselves when travelling to Demarara. . . . The English language is no longer unknown to many of those Indians."

Various attempts have been made by both nations to settle these conflicting claims, but, unfortunately, no simultaneous attempt has yet been made. Whenever the British Government have been prepared to negotiate, the Venezuelans have been careless in the matter; or, being in the midst of some one of their numerous revolutions, have been unable to attend to it. The attention of the Venezuelan Government was, according to the pamphlet now before us, first drawn to this question in 1841, when, in consequence of Sir Robert Schomburgk's expedition and attempt to fix the boundary, a boundary treaty was submitted by the English Government

Delays on both sides in seeking an adjustment.



to that of Venezuela. But the Venezuelans, though at first apparently prepared to enter into negotiations, soon broke them off, and the matter remained in abeyance till 1844, when the Venezuelans suggested, but did not offer, a boundary line which would have been altogether acceptable to the British Government. Again, in 1857, when the question of the Cuyuni gold mines, already alluded to, arose, the Venezuelans were immediately anxious to have the boundaries determined; but the English were then in no hurry about the matter. Then, when about a year afterwards the Governor of British Guiana was directed to go to Caraccas to obtain a settlement, the Venezuelans were in the midst of a revolution, and no one with sufficient authority could be found to act on their behalf. So the matter once more dropped. Now the Venezuelans seem once more anxious to raise the question.

A difficulty.

Marmol points out the real difficulty in certain somewhat complex sentences. It is, briefly, that there exists no possible natural "scientific frontier." At no point between the Orinoco and the Essequibo is there any great and long river, or any continuous range of mountains which might serve as an easily recognizable and indisputable boundary. But several different boundary lines have been under consideration at various times by one side or the other.

Venezuela  
claims the  
Essequibo  
line.

The latest, which we will now describe, is the Venezuelan claim brought forward in this pamphlet. The writer claims the Essequibo, from its mouth to the junction of the Rupununi, as the boundary. This, according to him, is a generous and liberal claim on the part of Venezuela; for he says "it is indisputable that our boundaries extend beyond the Essequibo. Such was the . . . dominion of Spain, such<sup>is</sup> is ours, as their legitimate successors. . . . Our limits extend beyond the Essequibo up to the limits of French Guiana. . . . Spain as the first discoverer and first occupier, of whose

rights we are the legitimate successors, always maintained her boundary lines beyond that river. Holland . . . only held in Guiana what Spain, the discoverer and first occupier, had seen fit to permit her.”

Venezuela  
claims the  
Essequibo  
line.

Let us see what proof is brought forward in support of this somewhat startling assertion of the right to claim the whole of British and Dutch Guiana. Venezuela claims as hers all that was once Spanish Guiana. And Marmol says that there exists a map of the province of Cumana which was sent to Spain in 1761 by the Governor Don José Dibuja in which “the province of Guiana is bounded on the east by all the coast in which are situated the Dutch colonies of Essequibo, Berbice, Demerara, Corentyne and Surinam; from which it is clearly deduced that Spain considered these possessions as Dutch colonies established on territory belonging to her.” But this wonderful map goes even further than Marmol claims, for it proves that Spanish Guiana was bounded “on the south by the dominions of the very faithful king of Brazil,” so that Venezuela might, and it would, claim French Guiana also. This is a fair sample of the sort of evidence on which Marmol would base his country’s claim.

But, according to him, the Venezuelans should be moderate, and should claim only the land which lies on the west of the Essequibo. “There is no kind of reason whatever for the (British) supremacy which is claimed over the Essequibo. In almost all its course we dwell on the bank, and it may be said to rise in our territory. We have, then, at least, an indisputable claim to one half of its width and to its navigation.” The right of the Republic of Venezuela to the land on the eastern side of the Essequibo (as far as French Guiana, or even Brazil) is, he urges, incontrovertible; but, voluntarily giving up that, they must claim all on the west bank. “Every other demarcation compromises the integrity of our [*i. e.*, Venezuelan] territory, which should



be defended on its eastern bank\* by the basin of that river." And the English themselves, the writer argues, have acknowledged this claim, in that, in 1840, Great Britain communicated to the Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs the commission which had been given to Schomburgk to explore the Essequibo and mark its limits, thus showing that she did not then claim, as she now does, exclusive possession of that river, and that she admitted the equal right of the Venezuelan republic to its waters.

Why the  
Essequibo  
line is im-  
portant to  
Venezuela

The eagerness with which the claim to all the land between the Orinoco and the Essequibo is pressed, may at first sight seem somewhat strange, seeing that it is not made with any immediate prospect or wish to colonize the land in question. But in several passages it is explained that the writer thinks that only by making the Essequibo the boundary of Venezuela can all chance of British advance toward the Orinoco be prevented.

The nature of the district in dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana, and with the claim set up by Francisco Marmol,† on behalf of the Venezuelans, to all the land on the western side of the Essequibo, has now been explained. This claim was founded on the assumption that the whole of Guiana — the whole, that is, of the land between the Orinoco and the Amazon — belonged originally to Spain; and that the Venezuelans, as inheritors from Spain, if they do not claim the whole of this, are at least fully justified in claiming so much as appears to them convenient to secure their possession of the Orinoco. According to Marmol,

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\* [*Note by counsel for Venezuela.* "Bank" is evidently a misprint; "*flank*" is Señor Marmol's word.]

† Some correspondence between the English representative in Venezuela and Francisco Marmol, on the subject of the English expeditions to Tupuquen, in 1857, was published in the colonial newspapers of that year. In this Marmol's name was invariably misprinted Manuel.

this object can be secured only by the extension of Venezuela to the Essequibo.

Beside this boundary claimed by Marmol, three other lines of demarcation have, at various times, been proposed by England or by Venezuela. These must now be discussed.

The matter seems not to have attracted the attention of either of the governments concerned till between 1835-40. During those years Robert, afterwards Sir Robert, Schomburgk, was employed by the British Government to explore and point out the most convenient boundaries between British Guiana and Brazil, on the one hand, and the former country and Venezuela on the other. At present we have only to deal with the Venezuelan boundary. Schomburgk marked the boundary as conceived by him in a map which, after lying unpublished for some thirty years, formed the basis of the geological map published in 1873, by Charles Barrington Brown, and which was itself published in 1877 (though dated 1875) under the auspices of the Government of British Guiana. Either this last published map or Brown's geological map may be consulted with a view to ascertaining the boundaries which seemed most suitable to Schomburgk. Doubtless recognizing the fact that England claims so much of Guiana as was in the possession of their predecessors, the Dutch, Schomburgk took as the most northern or rather northwestern point of British Guiana the site of an old Dutch post which, according to von Bouehenroeder's chart, published in 1798, existed at the mouth of the Amacura, a river which runs into the mouth of the Orinoco, a little to the west of the Barima; and from there southward he traces the western limit of British Guiana, first along the course of the Amacura, and then along certain natural features which, unsatisfactory as they are for the purpose, seemed to him the best available.

Schomburgk line, marked on his final map, is shown in Brown's map of 1873 and Stanford's map of 1875, as it existed in 1879 and before the British Government ordered it to be altered.

The alleged Barima post does not justify the English claim to that point.

This post on the Amacura, which may be said to be the northern starting point from which Schomburgk drew his line, can, however, hardly have been one of the regular outposts which the Dutch, from their central position in the colonies of Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice, established on what they supposed to be the outskirts of their possessions in Guiana. Its very existence is doubtful, for it is not shown anywhere but in Bouchenroeder's chart. In Hartsinek's map, published in 1770, there is no indication of any such settlement, and the boundary line of the "Wildekuste" — which name was applied to the tract co-extensive with the Dutch possessions — falls far south of the Amacura. But there is yet stronger evidence for the fact that the Dutch, at the close of the eighteenth century, did not consider that their territory extended so far towards the Orinoco. Pinckard, whose writings should have authority, and who came to Guiana in 1781, in the fleet which under Sir George Rodney first took Guiana from the Dutch, distinctly says in his admirable letters on Guiana, that the most northern outpost of the Dutch colonies at the time of their first capture by the English was on the Moroooca. The "*Ancien poste Hollandais*" marked in Bouchenroeder's map is very possibly one of the posts established by the first Dutch who came to Guiana, about the end of the sixteenth century, when, according to tradition, they tried to settle on the Orinoco, before finally taking up their position on the Pomeroon and Essequibo. Upon the whole, Schomburgk's claim, based upon the supposed existence of this Dutch post, to make the Amacura serve as part of the western boundary of British Guiana, seems untenable. At any rate, it never was and never could be admitted by the Venezuelans, who if they granted so much would be granting us the possession, not only of the whole sea coast between the Essequibo and the Orinoco and of the land for

Pinckard's  
Letters, 1781.

a long distance back from the coast, but also — and herein would be the chief sting to them — of a part, however small, of the southern bank of the Orinoco.

A boundary treaty, based on the survey by Schomburgk, was proposed in 1841, by the British Government; but, as was to be expected, it was not accepted by the Venezuelan authorities.

Venezuela  
could not  
be expected  
to accept  
Schom-  
burgk's line.

While Schomburgk was yet maturing his scheme, a large and fine map of Venezuela was published in 1840, at Caraccas by Agustin Cordazzi. This map is so often referred to by the Venezuelans that it seems to be regarded as not without authority. How far it is official is not clear. It was dedicated to the Constitutional Congress of Venezuela of 1830. Marmol says "the map of Cordazzi is not an official map. There is no act of competent authority which declares it such; on the contrary, our government has lately rejected claims from the government of New Granada for possessions on the bank of the Orinoco, founded on his demarcation." This denial of the authority of the map reads almost like an admission that it has sometimes, even in Venezuela, been regarded as of official authority. No *competent* act has, indeed, declared it such; but claims to land based on this map have been considered by the Venezuelan government as not unworthy of consideration. Remembering the frequency and rapidity with which revolutions take place and new governments are set up in Venezuela, it seems not improbable that of the successive governments some have accepted, some have rejected, the authority of Cordazzi's map. And at any rate it was drawn up by the man who of all Venezuelans has done most for, and knew most about, the geography of his country. It is, therefore, desirable to examine the boundary laid down by Cordazzi.

Cordazzi's  
map, 1840.

Cordazzi places the boundary on the coast of the Atlantic between the two colonies at the Moroooca. This is in accor-

The Moroooca  
line agrees  
with Pinck-  
ard.

dance with the statement of Pinckard, already alluded to, according to which the most northern outpost of the Dutch colonies was on that river. Starting from this Dutch post on the Moroooca, Cordazzi carries the boundary along the course of that river to its source in the mountain range called Sierra de Imataca, then southward, along the crest of that range, to the point nearest to the old Dutch outpost on the Cuyuni River, and from there in a straight line up to that outpost. Up to this point there is no reason why the British Government should not accept Cordazzi's line, which is based both on history and natural features. But after that, he carries it along the southern bank of the Cuyuni, and of the united streams of the Cuyuni and Mazaruni, to the point at which Bartica Grove now stands, and then up the whole course of the Essequibo as far as the junction of the Rupununi. This line, from the Cuyuni to the Rupununi, could never be accepted by the British Government; for it would cut off from British Guiana, not only Bartica Grove, but a tract of country of many thousand square miles in extent in which there are a considerable number of British, but not a single Venezuelan settler. However, no definite offer of this boundary line seems ever to have been made by the Venezuelan Government.

Venezuela  
was reasona-  
ble.

It appears, however, that about that time, in 1840 and the following years, the Venezuelan Government were inclined to be reasonable in the matter. This appears, not only from the map by Cordazzi, but from the following statement made by Marmol: "Guided by the design of putting an end to this question of boundaries, our Government Council in 1844 submitted for discussion a proposal for a dividing line which should be offered to Great Britain. It began at the mouth of the river Moroooca, following the course of that river up to its source. Thence it drew a meridian which, crossing the Cuyuni, went up to the Pacaraima range, which divides



the waters of the Essequibo from those of the Rio Branco.\* This line is yet more liberal than that proposed by Cordazzi. It would give us, as would Cordazzi, all the country settled by English-speaking people, and would also give us, as Cordazzi would not, much of the course of the Cuyuni, together with a large tract of land on the western bank of the Upper Essequibo, between that river and the Pacaraima mountains. Apparently, however, the Government Council did not approve of this suggestion, and did not make the proposed offer. The Venezuelan objection to the line was, according to Marmol, that it would leave the lower course of the Essequibo in sole possession of the British, and would thus virtually give them command of its navigation.

Yet another dividing line was proposed, this time by the British Government — “A line that should go from the mouth of the Moroooca to the point at which the river Barama unites with the Guiana; thence by the Barama up the stream as far as the Aunama, which would be ascended up to the place where this stream approaches nearest to the Aearabici, and following this river to its confluence with the Cuyuni; then continuing by this last, up stream, till it arrives at the high lands in contact with Roraima range, by which the waters which flow from the Essequibo are divided from those which run into the Rio Branco.” This, which, though it would give to the Venezuelans the territory between the Orinoco and the Moroooca, would take from them the course of the Cuyuni, much of which should, undoubtedly, belong to them, was an extraordinary suggestion, if, as appears, it was prepared as likely to be more agreeable to the Venezuelans than was Schomburgk’s suggestion. But it is unnecessary to discuss its merits, for its unscientific character is well indicated in the following remark made about

Lord Aberdeen’s line of 1844.

Lord Aberdeen claimed too much in the Cuyuni basin.

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\*[*Note by counsel for Venezuela.* Marmol’s original shows that the quotation closes here.]

it by Mr. Boddam-Wetham. "It seems to have escaped the notice both of the proposers, and those to whom it was proposed, that by no possible means could a line following the Cayuni River reach the Roraima range or anywhere near it."

The truce  
of 1850.

These various unsatisfactory propositions having been made between the years 1840 and 1845, the matter seems once more to have dropped for a time. In 1850 an agreement was made between the two governments, according to which "neither is allowed to encroach upon territory claimed by both; an agreement which has been entirely disregarded by both sides." Between 1852 and 1855, some discussion of the question seems to have taken place in London between Lord Aberdeen, who was then Prime Minister, and the then Venezuelan Consul Fortique, during which the latter made certain offers and statements apparently based on the map of Cordazzi, which he regarded as official. But these offers were afterward repudiated by the Venezuelan Government as unauthorized by them.

Carated  
mines, 1857.

In 1857 the gold mines of Tupuquen attracted labourers from far and wide. Immediately a true gold fever set in in British Guiana. Guiana was supposed to be a second California, if, indeed, it were not richer. There appeared to be no small danger that the whole population would move to the gold country. Exploring expeditions were sent by the Court of Policy, by the merchants, and were undertaken by private enterprise. The newspapers were full of glowing accounts of the new riches. The true El Dorado had, at last, been discovered. At last three facts were discovered which somewhat cooled the ardour of the gold-dreamers. In the first place, the Venezuelans, naturally enough, objected to our numerous English prospecting expeditions far into their territory. Then, there appeared to be great danger that the greater part of the labourers on the sugar estates would desert to the gold mines. And lastly, those



who visited the mines sent back very discouraging accounts of their condition and wealth.

At last it became evident that the gold fields yet discovered were all within Venezuelan territory, a fact which might have been before discovered at any moment by referring to Schomburgk's map. Then the people of the English colony turned their attention to discovering gold within their own territory. At last, some time before 1863, gold was discovered on the Cuyuni, at a point but two days' journey from the mouth of that river, and far on the English side, not only of Schomburgk's boundary line, but also of that laid down by Cordazzi. About the middle of 1863 the British Guiana Gold Mining Company was formed to work these fields. Buildings and machinery were erected on the spot, and some gold was extracted. News of these facts having reached the Venezuelan Government, they treated us as we had treated them in 1857. Then, we had made some show of claiming their gold mines of Tupuquen, and now they laid claim to ours near the mouth of the Amacura.\* They appealed to the British Government, which, instead of once for all settling the boundary, and so putting an end to these constant disputes, issued a proclamation to the English gold miners that they were working as adventurers, in disputed territory, and that they were to expect no protection from the British Government. The wonderful nature of this proclamation, dated in January, 1867, can only be understood by remembering that in 1857 we had at least tacitly, as indeed we were in justice bound to do, acknowledged our error in claiming the mines of Tupuquen, as being on the Venezuelan side of Schomburgk's line, and that the gold fields which we now claimed were not only far on our side of Schomburgk's line, but were so near our Penal Settlement

Caratal mines  
clearly in  
Venezuelan  
territory.

Cuyuni mine  
near mouth of  
river, 1863.

England's  
warning to  
English  
adventurers,  
1867.

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\* [Note by counsel for Venezuela. This should be Cuyuni.]

that to allow the uncertainty of the English claim to the gold field was virtually to allow the uncertainty of our claim to the Penal Settlement. But regardless of these considerations, the proclamation was issued in 1867, to the dismay and great loss of the Gold Company. Possibly that company would have made more energetic opposition to the proclamation, but that its affairs were unfortunately at the time not very flourishing. The surface gold at the place of their first operations had been exhausted, and the management at the mines had been very loose.

Two efforts were made by the company to induce the British government to settle this territorial question. In the first place, a murder having been committed at the Penal Settlement, which, according to the convention of 1850, and the proclamation of 1867, cannot be certainly regarded as within British territory, the company employed counsel for the accused to put in a plea of want of jurisdiction, the crime having been committed in disputed territory. The plea was of course overruled, but, equally of course, inconsistently. And in the second place, a petition and remonstrance against the proclamation was forwarded, through the Court of Policy, to the Home Government. No answer to this petition was ever published; but it was privately rumoured that it was refused, partly having regard to on the place that certain well-known prejudices on the part of the Government of the United States,\* the English Government were unwilling to enter into any dispute as to boundaries on the American continent. So after these feeble protests the Gold Company disappeared.

And now after forty years of nerveless attempts to settle this question, the history of which has now been given, the governments concerned are as far as ever from any satisfac-

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\*[*Note by counsel for Venezuela.* Thus in the original obviously it should read, "partly on the plea that having regard to certain " etc.]

tory agreement. Yet the matter is important to both sides, and especially important to Great Britain. If the Venezuelan claims, together with certain similar, but though far smaller, claims made by Brazil, were admitted in their fullest extent, <sup>Importance of the boundary question.</sup> the area of British Guiana would be reduced from some 76,000 square miles to less than 14,000 square miles. Nor is this large tract, which would be lost to the English colony, merely waste and unexplored forest and savannah. It includes the whole of the Essequibo coast, one of the largest, most cultivated, and not the least fertile tracts of the colony; it includes the whole of the western bank of the Essequibo River, which from the mouth to its first falls, some sixty miles above, is more or less thickly peopled by British subjects, and from which a large part of the wood used in, and exported from, the colony is obtained; and it includes the large and flourishing convict settlement on the Mazaruni, the establishment of which has been accomplished at no little cost. Even that part of the tract which is now merely unused savannah and forest might at any time acquire great value by the discovery in it of valuable vegetable or mineral produce, or even merely by the adoption of an adequate system of woodcutting. When that time comes, when the interior of the colony is turned to account, the difficulty of settling the boundaries will be much increased. Moreover, while formerly all efforts to determine the matter were frustrated by the impossibility of obtaining the continued co-operation of Venezuela, the Venezuelans are, at the present time, not only ready to co-operate, but determined to press the matter: and while fully recognizing the fact that they are unable to force a settlement with England by force of arms, they ask for the appointment of a body of arbitrators. This request should surely be granted. For it is quite time for the British Government to undertake the question with full determination to carry it to a conclusion.

Boundary  
between  
British  
Guiana and  
Brazil ought  
to be settled.

And while settling the boundary which is to divide this colony from Venezuela, it would be as well at the same time to settle that which is to divide it from Brazil; so that the colony of British Guiana may be compact, and may, at last, know its own extent. Indeed, the two questions, that of the Brazilian and the Venezuelan frontiers, must be settled at one and the same time; for some of the territory on the western bank of the upper Essequibo is claimed by all three colonies. Marmol publishes extracts from a treaty made between Venezuela and Brazil in which those two colonies distribute to themselves the lands between the Pacaraima mountains and the Essequibo which are claimed by Great Britain and which, so far as they are or have been inhabited at all, are and have been inhabited by English subjects.

The boundary between British Guiana and Brazil might be much more easily determined than that between the former colony and Venezuela. For the land claimed by the Brazilians is a waste which has never been really occupied by any nation, and very far from either Brazilian or English settlements; so that, there being no historical grounds for preferring one boundary to another, it would only be necessary to find out which of the natural features of the country affords the most marked dividing line. This line would almost certainly be found to be that laid down by Sir Robert Schomburgk. But unfortunately, his survey having been made without any reference to the Brazilian authorities, the latter, as was to be expected, were unwilling to accept it. A mixed commission appointed by the powers concerned would doubtless settle the boundary between British Guiana and Brazil without much trouble.

The Maroocha  
is the true  
coast-line  
boundary  
with Vene-

The most convenient boundaries of British Guiana, and those which history and convenience give us every right to claim, would be as follows: Taking the mouth of the

Morooca as the northernmost point of colony, the boundary from there to the site of the old Dutch outpost on the Cuyuni should be as in Cordazzi's map. From there it should be carried in a straight line to the nearest point of the Mazaruni, and then up the course of that river to the junction of the river Cako, and along the Cako to Roraima. From that central and well-marked point southward to the source of the Corentyne, and then northward along the course of river, it should follow the line as laid down in Schomburgk's map. These boundaries would best compromise the various conflicting claims.

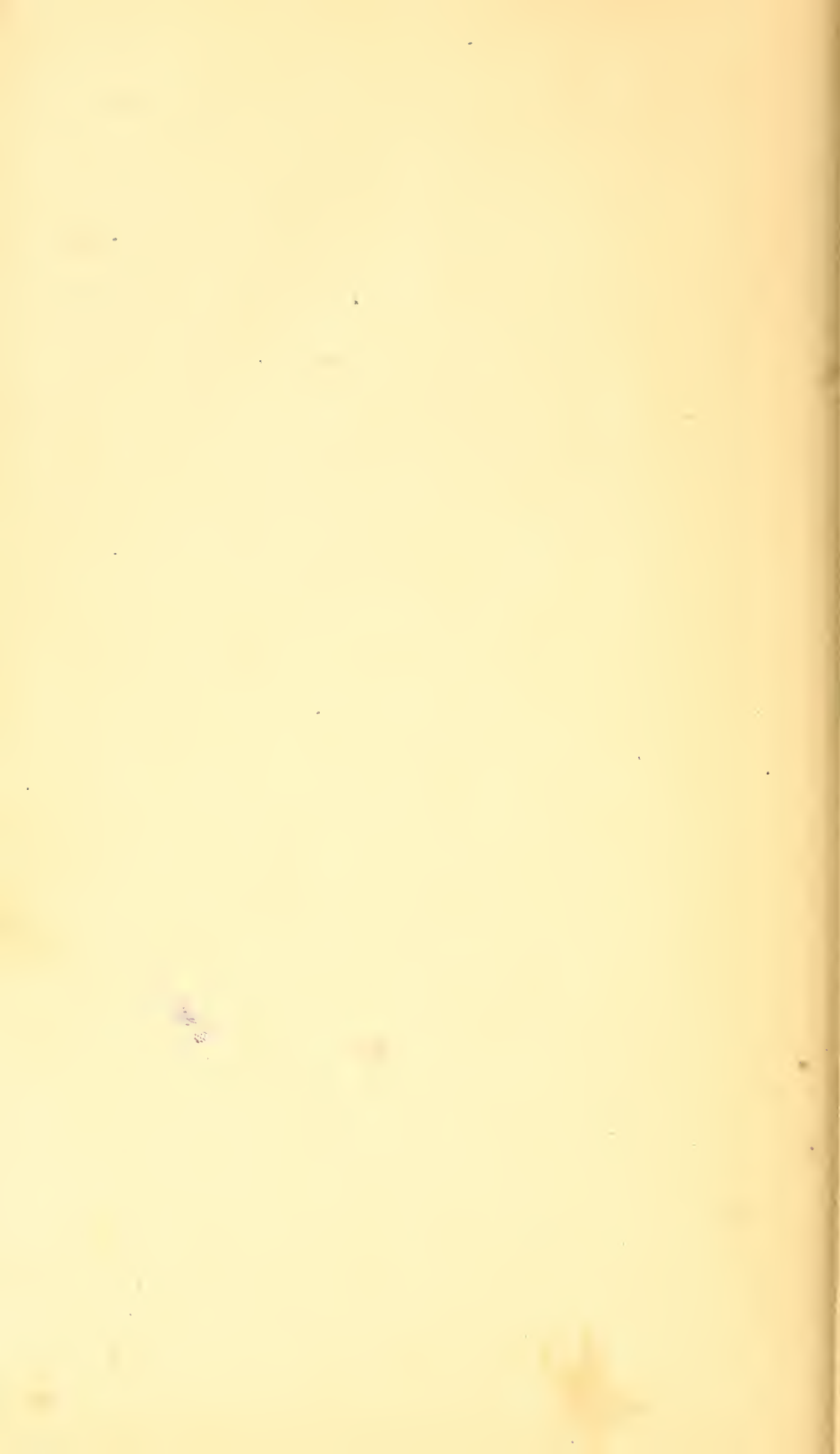
zuela, according to the author.

The author considers that Great Britain is not entitled to any part of the Cuyuni basin.



















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